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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2009

In Today's Papers

The Road to Local Elections Passes through the Southeast  
Media outlets reported over the weekend and today that on Saturday, Prime Minister Erdogan addressed supporters in the mainly Kurdish southeastern provinces of Adiyaman and Diyarbakir on the eve of the municipality elections, which are scheduled for March 29th. During the return flight home to Ankara from Diyarbakir, Erdogan told journalists the state-owned TRT's multi-language broadcasts, which now include Kurdish, "will be expanded to include broadcasts in Farsi and Arabic as well." Erdogan noted his government was preparing "to bring the tomb of popular Kurdish singer Ahmet Kaya back to Turkey." Kaya was forced to flee from Turkey to France in June 1999 due to his political views; he died in Paris one year later, and is buried in the Pere Lachaise cemetery. Erdogan also told supporters at election rallies that the Ergenekon arrests were "cleansing Turkey," and he stressed that his government should continue the investigation "at any cost." He compared the Ergenekon probe to the "Clean Hands" operation in Italy, and added "Turkey, in fact, should have carried this out years ago, so we will not stop (prematurely) this time."

Papers report analysts say Erdogan's messages during the Diyarbakir rally stopped short of offering concrete solutions to the Kurdish issue, which will make it harder for the ruling AKP to beat the pro-Kurdish DTP in the Diyarbakir municipality's elections.

"An Axis of Genocide Formed between Sudan and Turkey" says ANCA.  
(CNN Turk)

Media report that the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) has launched a new campaign by sending a letter to the U.S. Congress that accuses Turkey of actively supporting the Sudanese administration's genocide against their own citizens in Darfur. Mainstream CNN Turk reports, "ANCA's website features a photograph of Turkish President Gul hand-in-hand with Sudanese President al-Bashir." Mainstream Milliyet reports, "According to ANCA, Turkey and Sudan cooperate in three major areas - Turkey sells weapons to Sudan, Turkish diplomats actively deny that a genocide is taking place in Sudan, and Turkey plans to use their seat on the UN Security Council to postpone (the ICC's ability to) press charges of

genocide in Darfur" against President al-Bashir. Islamist-oriented Zaman reports "The Armenian lobby is charging Ankara with playing a role in the genocide in Darfur by engaging in close relations with the regime leaders in Sudan." Today's Zaman, which is an English language daily owned by Islamist-oriented Zaman, reports, "The 'genocide axis' claims spread by ANCA are likely to upset Ankara, but the Turkish government may find a recent speech by a pro-Armenian congressman even more appalling. Republican Rep. Frank Pallone Jr., co-chairman of the Armenian Caucus, said in a Feb. 13 speech on the House floor that Turkey was guilty of 'hypocrisy' as it levels human rights charges against Israel for its Gaza operation in January while it continues to deny the 'Armenian genocide.'" Mainstream NTV reports in "A Sudan Attack Against Turkey from the Armenian Diaspora," that "ANCA has accused Turkey of supporting efforts by Sudan to deny the genocide and of using Turkey's seat on the UNSC to protect Sudan" from the ICC's charges of genocide. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports, "The Armenian Lobby in the U.S. is now using Sudan in its efforts to make Washington recognize its 'genocide' claims." The English language version of mainstream Hurriyet reports in "Armenians Use Turkey-Sudan Ties for Recognition," that "The largest U.S. Armenian group has launched a campaign to urge the administration in Washington and Congress to formally recognize Armenians' claims of 'genocide', by using Ankara's developing ties with Sudan."

Today, no Turkish newspaper dares to publish this photo of Turkish President Gul and Sudanese President al-Bashir, but they all mention the photo on ANCA's website as part of the ANCA press release accusing Turkey and Sudan of forming, "An Axis of Genocide."

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#### President Gul Visits Kenya, Tanzania

Media outlets report that on Sunday, President Abdullah Gul wrapped up his tours of Kenya and Tanzania, during which Gul signed several agreements aimed at increasing cooperation and bilateral trade. "Turkey has a responsibility toward Africa," Gul said, and underlined the fact that Turkey's election to the UN Security Council was possible with the support it received from African countries. President Gul traveled to Tanzania yesterday, where he was welcomed by Tanzanian President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete. Gul attended the Turkey-Tanzania Business Forum and participated in a banquet hosted in his honor. Gul also met with 37 young Tanzanians who graduated from universities in Turkey. President Kikwete thanked Gul for providing Tanzanian citizens with educational opportunities in Turkey. "Thanks to Turkey, today we have many doctors, engineers and other specialists in our country," said Kikwete.

#### A Hopeful Survey for the MHP

Mainstream Vatan reports that the opposition political party MHP initiated a political survey that was conducted by a group of academics led by Gazi University Professor Kemal Gormez. The survey was conducted in Ankara on February 17th and 18th among 2649 likely voters. According to the survey results, AKP support dropped to 33.3 percent from last October's 49.5 percent, support for the CHP increased from 27.3 percent to 28.7 percent and support for MHP increased to 25.2 percent in February 2009 from October 2008's 10.4 percent. Another interesting development in the survey was the change in the vote for potential candidates. Support for the AKP's unpopular Ankara Mayor Melih Gokcek dropped to 32.5 percent and support for the CHP's Candidate for Mayor Karayalcin's remains at 29.8 percent. However, the MHP's Ankara Mayor Candidate Mansur Yavas increased his support from 9.6 in October 2008 to 27.7 percent this month.

#### Obama Won't Say "Genocide"

Mainstream Sabah, liberal Radikal, leftist Taraf, Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak and leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet all quote Ruben Safrastyan, Director of the Armenian National Science Academy's Institute of Eastern Studies, who said in a statement to the Armenian press over the weekend, "Because Obama will need Ankara as a supply route for operations in Afghanistan, he will not use the word 'genocide' in his statement on April 24th." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet headlines, "Obama Will Not Say 'Armenian Genocide,'" "

while leftist Taraf, Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak, and liberal Radikal headline, "Obama Will Not Say 'Genocide.'"

U.S. Will Need Turkey During Withdrawal from Iraq  
Liberal Radikal reports today, "The U.S. is preparing to ask Turkey for logistical support for the withdrawal of U.S. soldiers from Iraq." Radikal bases this story on a GAO report submitted to the U.S. House of Representatives which suggests Turkey "as one of the exit routes for a withdrawal from Iraq." Islamist-oriented Zaman says "The U.S. Is On the Way to a Withdrawal from Iraq" and notes, "Turkey, Jordan and Kuwait are among the countries to be used during the withdrawal."

'The House of Transparency' (Milliyet)  
Mainstream Milliyet has renamed the White House "The House of Transparency" due to the Obama administration's use of "new media" in order to communicate with the public. Milliyet's Washington correspondent praises the new White House website for its vast collection of statements, proclamations, transcripts, and videos that painstakingly document the works of the White House since President Obama took office last month.

Editorial Commentary on Turkey's Foreign Policies; Turkey-KRG in Iraq

Emre Akoz wrote in mainstream Sabah: "After talking to Prime

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Minister Erdogan, he seems very hopeful that Turkey will play a facilitative role for dialogue between Middle Eastern countries and the Western world. He also hopes for a chance to discuss this with President Obama during the upcoming G-20 summit."

Semih Idiz wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "There is a growing perception that Turkey has started moving away from the West. Some analysts say that pro-Turkey demonstrations in the streets of the Middle East boost the AKP's domestic propaganda, but the demonstrations do not constitute a good reason to believe that Turkey remains committed to Western values. Dominique Moisi from the French group IFRI and David Phillips of the Atlantic Council in America are making some noteworthy remarks on that."

Omer Taspinar wrote in mainstream Sabah: "The U.S. and Turkey are enjoying good bilateral relations, especially since the U.S. began to actively coordinate with Turkey against the PKK. With this confidence, Turkey has initiated new economic and political efforts in relations with the Kurdish Regional Government in northern Iraq. Regarding the future of Iraq, the status of Kirkuk remains the most important problem to address. In that regard, it is expected that Washington will come up with some creative formulas."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- The pro-Kurdish DTP's Deputy Chair Emine Ayna told the press in Diyarbakir yesterday that fighting between Turkish armed forces and the PKK should be ended and the PKK must be allowed to join democratic politics before the organization can lay down its arms.

- Joost Lagendijk, the co-chair of the Turkey-EU joint parliamentary committee, says the tensions between PM Erdogan and Israeli President Peres in Davos will have no impact on EU-Turkey ties.

- Over the last six years, the European Court of Human Rights received 262 complaints for torture and abuse against Turkey; the court ruled that 123 cases of the 262 constituted human rights abuses.

- Yalcin Akcan (22), head of the opposition CHP's youth branch in Bodrum, was hospitalized with brain trauma and several fractures in his body after being severely beaten by a group of assailants early this morning. Akcan was attacked while he was keeping watch over a CHP tent that was set up to recruit new voters in the coastal Aegean

town.

#### World

- Insurgents in Somalia attack a military base in Mogadishu used by African Union peacekeepers, killing at least 11 soldiers from Burundi.
- Pirates hijack a Greek-owned cargo vessel in the Gulf of Aden, off the coast of Somalia.
- The Turkish-German Economy Fair "EXPO Turkey 2009" will be opened in Essen, Germany on May 22-24.

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